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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1993-1994 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET AND 1995

PART II. ASIA AND OCEANIA

Section 9 - Philippines

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.94-03258

II.9 PHILIPPINES

Country Overview

Characteristics of the refugee population

1. At 31 December 1993, UNHCR provided protection and assistance to some 5,400 Vietnamese, including 3,300 asylum-seekers determined not to be refugees, as well as 900 Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong housed in the Regional Resettlement Transit Centre (RRTC). Some 1,600 persons were awaiting resettlement in the United States under the Orderly Departure Programme (ODP). The country also hosted over 200 non-Indo-Chinese refugees and asylum-seekers of various nationalities.

2. Vietnamese who have been determined not to be refugees, are living in the Philippines First Asylum Camp (PFAC) in Puerto Princesa on Palawan Island, which is administered by the Western Command of the Armed Forces (WESCOM). The Regional Resettlement Transit Centre and the Philippines Refugee Processing Centre (PRPC) in Morang, Bataan district on Luzon Island, accommodate refugees and Vietnamese to be resettled in the United States of America. The Philippines Refugee Transit Centre (PRTC) in Manila provides accommodation to refugees prior to their departure to third countries and also to those who opt for voluntary repatriation to Viet Nam. While most non-Indo-Chinese refugees are residing in Metro Manila, some live in the regions of Baguio Dagupan, Quezon and Mindanao.

3. In 1993 the Indo-Chinese population in the Philippines decreased by some 20 per cent following the continuing implementation of resettlement and voluntary repatriation programmes. An additional 5,000 Vietnamese from the region left the Philippines under the ODP in the same year. No new arrivals from Viet Nam were recorded in 1993. Approximately 40 per cent of the Vietnamese camp population are adult men, 35 per cent adult women, and 25 per cent children.

Major developments (1993 and first quarter 1994)

4. The consolidation of UNHCR assistance programmes continues with the gradual termination of assistance activities implemented by different voluntary and government agencies in view of the completion of the Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese (CPA) at the end of 1995.

5. Refugee status determination was completed in September 1993. All refugees were transferred to Bataan camp and those who had been determined not to be refugees received counselling prior to their return. Some 350 persons from the camps repatriated to Viet Nam in 1993, compared to only 130 in 1992. Some 400 persons returned to Viet Nam in the first quarter of 1994.

6. In 1993, the Philippines Government agreed to accept some 1,500 Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong for resettlement processing, some 1,000 of whom had arrived in the first quarter of 1994.

Programme objectives and priorities

7. The main activity and objective of UNHCR in the Philippines will be to accelerate resettlement processing of the Vietnamese refugees and the voluntary repatriation of rejected asylum-seekers. However, it is expected that those who refuse to return to Viet Nam, as well as refugees who fail to secure resettlement, will remain in the Philippines after the end of 1994. For those groups special arrangements may need to be made before the expiration of the CPA at the end of 1995.

8. In 1994-1995, when the last group of Vietnamese to be resettled under the ODP is expected to have completed its training course, the Philippine Government and UNHCR plan to close the PRTC.

9. Assistance will continue to be provided to non-Indo-Chinese refugees in the form of subsistence allowances to cover the cost of accommodation, education and health care. Efforts towards finding long term solutions will continue by negotiating with the Philippine Government the possibility of local integration and the right to work to enhance self-reliance. Should this solution prove not to be feasible, resettlement in third countries will be pursued.

Arrangements for implementation/related inputs

10. WESCOM is still UNHCR's main implementing partner in Palawan. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) arranges for medical examinations and travel for refugees being resettled in third countries and for asylum-seekers returning to Viet Nam under the voluntary repatriation programme. Refugee Services Philippines (RSP) implements counselling and assists urban individual refugees other than Indo-Chinese. The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) implements an information campaign in Palawan camp promoting voluntary repatriation.

11. The PRPC, RRTC and PRTC are administered by the Philippines Government Task Force on International Refugee Assistance and Administration (TFIRAA).

12 The World Food Programme (WFP) provides basic food commodities, including rice, vegetable oil, sugar and pulses. Other agencies such as Community and Family Services International (CFSI), World Relief Corporation (WRC), the Philippines Red Cross (PRC) and International Social Services (ISS) are implementing specific activities in Bataan under the overall coordination of UNHCR.

General Programmes

Care and maintenance

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

13. In 1993, UNHCR continued to provide care and maintenance assistance to Vietnamese refugees on Palawan and Bataan in the form of cooked food, domestic items, water supply, sanitation facilities, health care, shelter, social services and education. Transportation of food and materials as well as agency operational costs were also covered. A substancial reduction in the budget was achieved when the proposed training of some 6,000 former political prisoners in Viet Nam was cancelled.

14. The subsistence allowance for non-Indo-Chinese refugees, initialy planned for nine months, was extended to 12 months, as refugees experienced difficulty in finding employment in the local labour market.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

15. In 1994, planned assistance under the care and maintenance programme is limited to some 400 non-Indo-Chinese refugees, including their dependants. The assistance will be provided in the form of counselling and subsistence allowances to cover the costs of accommodation, household items, health, education, local transport and legal services. Support to the implementing agency RSP is also covered under this project. Refugees who qualify for permanent residence will be assisted in the integration process through job placement activities.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

16. It is expected that the number of beneficiaries under this project will remain the same in 1995.

Resettlement

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

17. Upon completion of the refugee status determination process in September 1993, the Vietnamese refugees were transferred to the Philippines Refugee Processing Centre in Bataan or to Manila. While awaiting resettlement, they were provided with assistance, including food, domestic items, water, sanitation facilities, health care, shelter, and social services. Some 1,250 refugees from the Philippines were resettled in 1993.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

18. The same assistance as in 1993 is being provided to refugees who are awaiting resettlement in the PRRC in Bataan and the PRTC in Manila. This will include some 1,500 refugees who are now in the Philippines and 1,500 refugees transferred from Hong Kong.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

19. It is foreseen that some refugees will remain in the Philippines in 1995, including transit cases from Hong Kong. Thus the same level of assistance as provided in 1994 is proposed for 1995.

Special Programmes

Comprehensive Plan of Action for Indo-Chinese Refugees (CPA)

Care and maintenance

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

20. Vietnamese asylum-seekers in Palawan camp awaiting decisions of their status determination, as well as registered asylum-seekers continued to receive multi-sectoral assistance which includes food, domestic items, water supply, sanitation facilities, health care, shelter, social services and education. The costs for the transportation of food and materials and agency operational support were also covered under this project, as well as the costs relating to refugee status determination.

(b) **1994 programme implementation**

21. Rejected Vietnamese asylum-seekers, who are all accommodated in Palawan camp, will continue to receive multi-sectoral assistance while awaiting their return to Viet Nam. Some 2,800 persons are expected to be assisted in 1994.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

22. It is foreseen that those who continue to oppose repatriation will remain in the Philippines in 1995. They will continue to receive assistance until a solution has been found, prior to the completion of the CPA at the end of 1995.

Repatriation

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

23. Following the results of the refugee status determination procedure, some Vietnamese who did not qualify for refugee status opted for return to their country of origin. Streamlining of the project reduced the financial requirements in 1993, although the number of persons who volunteered to repatriate increased to 357 persons.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

24. Efforts will continue to focus on the voluntary repatriation of rejected Vietnamese asylum-seekers living in the Palawan camp. Assistance will cover the costs of counselling services, vocational and technical training, legal assistance, local transport of agencies' staff who assist in the repatriation movements and other provisions for implementing agencies.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

25. Some 1,500 rejected Vietnamese asylum-seekers may still be in the country at the beginning of 1995. While assistance will continue to be extended to this group, it may be necessary to make special arrangements.

Resettlement

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

26. Some 7,000 Vietnamese under the ODP were accommodated in PRPC in Bataan in 1993. During their stay, these Vietnamese undertook intensive language training and cultural orientation designed to facilitate their integration in the resettlement country. Training activities were funded by the United States of America and Norway. Some 5,000 Vietnamese were resettled in the United States in 1993. In February 1993, Norway phased out its assistance following the departure of the last group of 348 Vietnamese to Norway. During the training, the Vietnamese received assistance which included food, domestic items, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, social services and education.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

27. The proposed assistance will be limited to the maintenance costs of the last group of 1,801 Vietnamese who are eligible for the United States ODP until a solution has been found.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

28. It is foreseen that some 500 refugees will be in the Philippines in 1995. The proposed assistance will continue until a solution has been found. The PRPC in Bataan will be closed once the last group has left the Philippines.

Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

(a) **Variations in planned activities in 1993**

29. In 1993, total expenditures were lower than expected under all budget chapters, except for contractual services, which resulted from expenditure incurred for the training of a Junior Professional Officer (JPO). There were no changes in staffing levels. Despite an increase in local salary scales, which came into effect as of 1 July 1993, expenditures under salaries and common staff costs were lower due to the non-occupancy of one international and two local posts.

(b) **1994 planned implementation**

30. The total of the revised 1994 requirements is lower than the initial estimate. One local post of Programme Assistant was discontinued effective 1 January 1994. However, staff costs have increased as a result of the application of the revised local salary scales for the whole of 1994, and the extension of two posts of Associate Programme Officer (JPO) and Associate Protection Officer (JPO) until 30 September 1995 and 31 October 1995 respectively. Non-staff costs under local and regional travel have been increased to cover more frequent extra-regional travel of staff to Viet Nam. Costs under general operating expenses are lower and cover costs for renovation

of the premises. Needs under office supplies and materials are lower and the purchase of new data processing equipment is also planned in 1994.

(c) **1995 programme proposals**

31. The total initial 1995 estimate is estimated to be lower than the 1994 revised requirements, mainly as a result of a reduction in staff costs. One post of Field Officer will be discontinued on 31 December 1994, and two posts of Programme Officer and Resettlement Assistant are foreseen for discontinuation on 30 June 1995. All other time limited posts have been extended up to the end of 1995. Non-staff costs are estimated at the same level as in 1994. General operating expenses are slightly lower with the planned reduction of posts. No changes in costs are foreseen under office supplies and materials while a small provision has been made for the acquisition of new office furniture.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN THE PHILIPPINES

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1993	1994		1995	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1993 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
474.7	407.8	324.2	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	324.2
10.8 a/	–	–	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
7.9 a/	–	–	LOCAL SETTLEMENT	–
3,531.9 b/	1,054.6	794.9	RESETTLEMENT	1,045.2
–	–	697.8	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	689.7
4,025.3	1,462.4	1,816.9	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	2,059.1
339.5	362.6	55.0	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Annexes I b and II b	55.0
4,364.8	1,825.0	1,871.9	TOTAL (1)	2,114.1
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
3,484.0	5,466.6	3,373.9	COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF ACTION	1,424.3
–	–	324.2	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Annexes I a and II a	112.4
99.5	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS	–
136.9	87.8	127.2	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer	127.2
3,720.4	5,554.4	3,825.3	TOTAL (2)	1,663.9
8,085.2	7,379.4	5,697.2	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	3,778.0

a/ obligation incurred against Overall Allocation
b/ of which US$ 645 incurred against Overall Allocation